

Analysis of Wethersfield, CT Policing Data 2013-2018

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Note: Skip to [Summary Findings](#) on page 4. Skip to [detailed year-to-year data](#) on pages 6-16.

Goals and Research Questions

Given access to police stop and citation data from Wethersfield, CT from October of 2013 through December of 2018 via FOIA request, we were commissioned by the [Community Party](#) of Hartford, CT to address the following questions in light of reported concerns:

- 1) Are there apparent racial disparities in stops and/or citations?
- 2) Are non-residents the majority of stops and/or citations?
- 3) Are non-residents of color being “profiled” (stopped disproportionately)?

In the following report we provide summaries of stop/citation rates according to race, residency, and type of citation for the years under examination. Some limitations on the accuracy and precision of our analysis should be noted in the sections below, yet we are confident in the following summary findings and their indication that ***further examination of and concern over racial disparities in Wethersfield policing is warranted.***

Brief Notes on Method

Considerable work was involved to prepare the raw intake (stop/citation) data for analysis. This stemmed largely from the attempt by the Wethersfield PD to use simultaneous measures of race and ethnicity that did not actually reflect clear racial or ethnic categories. For instance, Latinx populations as a distinct racial group were expressed as racially “White” and ethnically “Hispanic.” First, “Hispanic” is a problematic and empirically vague concept that actually racializes Spanish-speaking people of color rather than reflect any specific ethnic group. Second, as those being stopped/cited are being categorized primarily on sight and a limited interaction, it reflects the process of ascribing and interpreting racial rather than ethnic identities, where ethnicity refers to one’s cultural practices and geographic origins that are not readily apparent. The use of “Middle Eastern” as an ethnic category in policing data was potentially problematic in a similar sense, as it would be difficult to make this determination on sight during a stop without asking drivers directly or making assumptions from (for instance) religious or cultural signifiers on the driver or vehicle. It is also unclear as to what specific

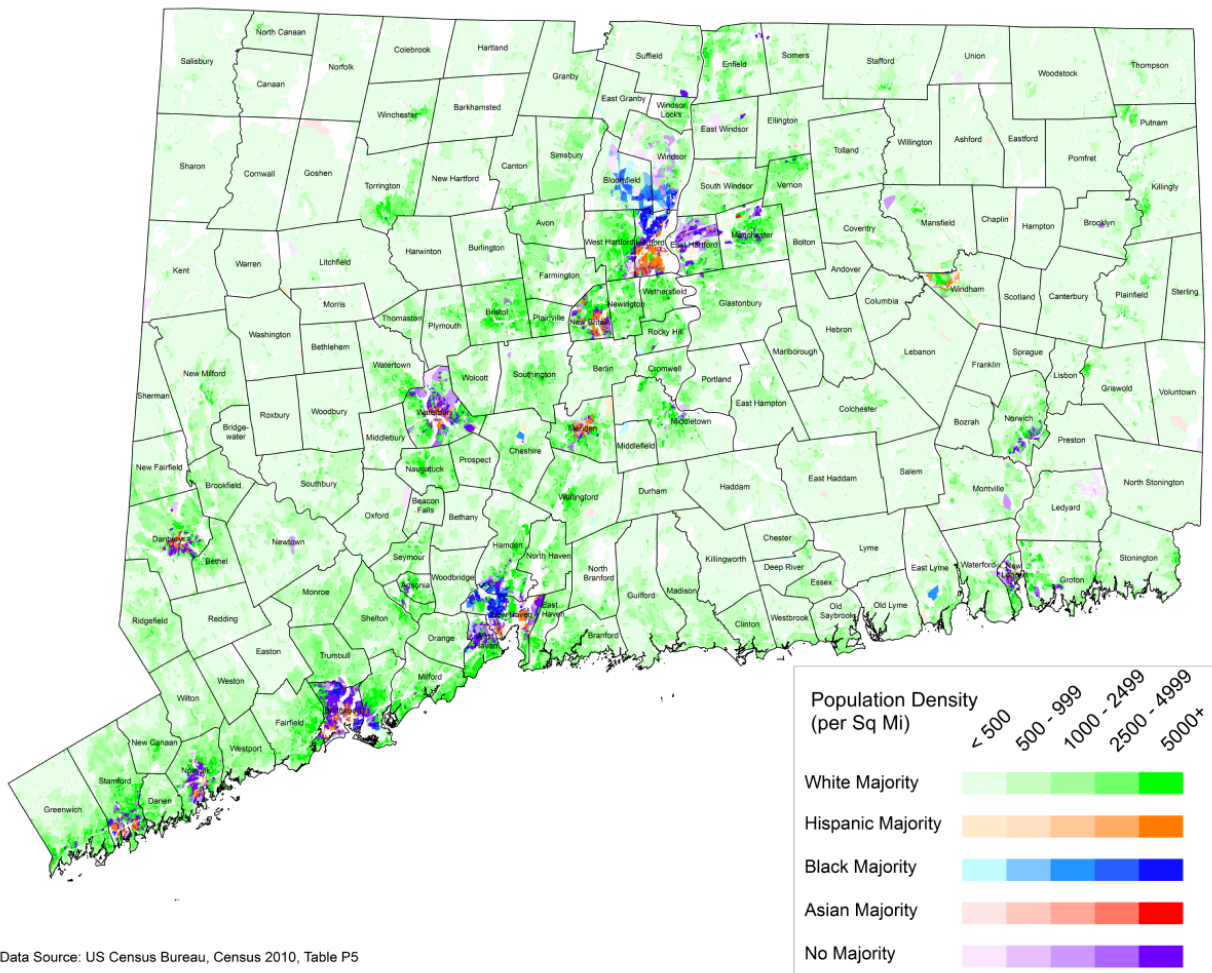
populations fit into this category, as it is not a clearly defined region or geographically tied ethnic group.

Contextual Details: Wethersfield, CT

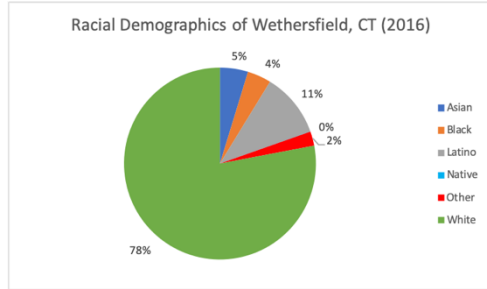
Point of Comparison: Racial Demographics of Wethersfield, CT

Wethersfield is a town of approximately 26,000 people located in the center of Connecticut immediately south / southeast of the Capital City of Hartford along the Connecticut River. Though Hartford is predominantly a city of color, with significant Latinx neighborhoods (Park St.) and a Black “north end,” Wethersfield is predominantly White—as is much of the state geographically. The largest population of color in Wethersfield are Latinx (11%) with some significant pockets of Black (4%) and Asian (5%) populations.

Race and Ethnicity in Connecticut, by Population Density



Data Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2010, Table P5



Racial Demographics of Wethersfield, CT (2016)

Asian	5%
Black	4%
Latino	11%
Native American	0%
Other	2%
White	78%

It is important for this report to note that Hartford and Wethersfield are also separated by a major north – south thoroughfare (Interstate 91) connecting the Boston and New York City Metro Areas, and that State Route 2 also passes through Wethersfield before connecting to Interstate 91 and the city of Hartford. Unlike more isolated towns in the state, Wethersfield sees considerable “out of town” commuters or travelers.



The data below is presented in order to estimate the racial disparities of stop and citation rates for each year under examination. It should be noted that this report presents *estimates* of racial disparities because the racial categories listed in demographic data are not completely

congruent with racial categories measured in traffic stop/citation data. Fortunately, the categorization of race only differs in that policing data measures for “Middle Eastern” populations in specific years (2013-14) while general demographic data for Wethersfield collapse “Middle Eastern,” populations into the catch-all category of “other.” This limits our ability to provide precise statistics, but not our ability to indicate whether further examination or concern over racial (and other) disparities is warranted by the data available.

Summary Findings

- Are there apparent racial disparities in stops and/or citations?

Yes. For every year under examination Black and Latinx populations appear to be disproportionately stopped and/or cited while White populations are consistently under-represented in stop/citation counts. Racial disparities for all years are greater for citations than for stops, indicating higher chances for Black and Latinx drivers to be sanctioned.

Demonstrated in the table below, Black populations are stopped approximately 4.5 times and cited 5 – 6.5 times more than would be predicted from their relative population size. Black populations are the most disproportionately stopped/cited. Similarly, Latinx populations are stopped at 2.5 – 3.5 times and cited at 3.7 – 4.7 times their relative population size, and are the most stopped/cited population of color in Wethersfield. In three of the years under examination (2013-14, 2015-16, 2016-17) Latinx populations were cited more than any other racial group though representing approximately 11% of the Wethersfield population.

<u>Race</u>	<u>Wethersfield Demographics (2016)</u>	<u>SBR* (2015-16)</u>	<u>SBR (2016-17)</u>	<u>CBR* (2015-16)</u>	<u>CBR (2016-17)</u>
Asian	5%	1%	2%	0%	1%
Black	4%	19%	18%	26%	20%
Latinx	11%	28%	38%	41%	52%
Native Am.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	78%	52%	42%	33%	27%

*Note: SBR = Stops by Race; CBR = Citations by Race

- Are non-residents the majority of stops and/or citations?

Yes. As made obvious from the table below and the charts to follow, *non-residents make up the vast majority of those stopped and cited by the Wethersfield Police Department.* There is some considerable variation from year to year in this proportion but the trend is clear.

<u>Race</u>	<u>2013-14</u>	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2018</u>
Residents Stopped	19%	18%	34%	24%	27%
Non-Residents Stopped	81%	82%	66%	76%	73%
Residents Cited	12%	9%	33%	14%	17%
Non-Residents Cited	88%	91%	67%	86%	83%

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- Are non-residents of color being “profiled” (stopped disproportionately)?

The data appears to indicate this as a strong possibility. As noted above, a vast majority of those stopped are non-residents in a town that notably sits on or near significant commuter routes. As illustrated below and in charts to follow, *most of the non-residents stopped (54% - 61% below) are people of color, Black and Latinx drivers in particular.* Further, Black and Latinx non-resident drivers are stopped at a similar, though slightly higher disparity than measured for stops/citations overall, while racial disparities are significantly lower (nearly match relative population in 2016-17 below) when one looks at *residents* who are stopped. In short, *it is plausible from the data that the disproportionate stopping of non-resident Black and Latinx drivers contributes to the greater racial disparities addressed in the first research question above.* Further data collection and analysis would be helpful in confirming this plausible explanation.

<u>Race</u>	<u>Wethersfield Demographics (2016)</u>	<u>NRS* (2015-16)</u>	<u>NRS (2016-17)</u>	<u>RS (2015-16)</u>	<u>RS (2016-17)</u>
Asian	5%	1%	2%	1%	3%
Black	4%	23%	22%	11%	6%
Latinx	11%	30%	37%	22%	18%
Native Am.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	78%	45%	39%	66%	73%

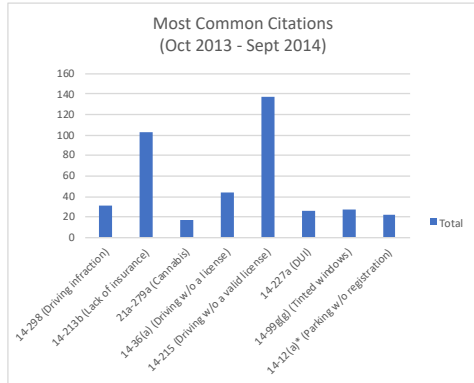
*Note: NRS = Non-Residents Stopped; RS = Residents Stopped

- Other relevant findings?

The most common citations for all years under examination are for driving with an expired license or without proof of insurance. It may be worth noting that these are not infractions that would be apparent to a police officer prior to a stop, whereas stops for DUIs, speeding tickets, and other driving infractions (all comparably low) are initiated from observable driving behavior. This would seem to support a plausible hypothesis of profiling, though more information is necessary to confirm such an indicator. For instance, it is unclear from the data the extent to which citations result from a checkpoint vs. a traditional traffic stop. Again, this analysis points to the merits of further investigation.

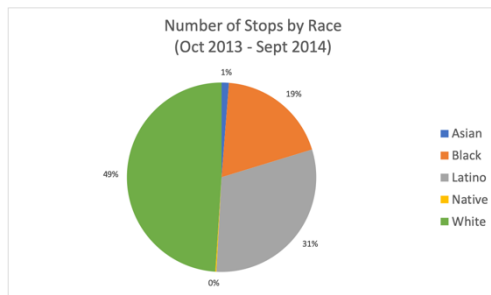
For those interested in greater detail, please find year-to-year data in the final sections below.

Traffic Stops and Citations by Race and Residency (Oct. 2013 – Sept. 2014)



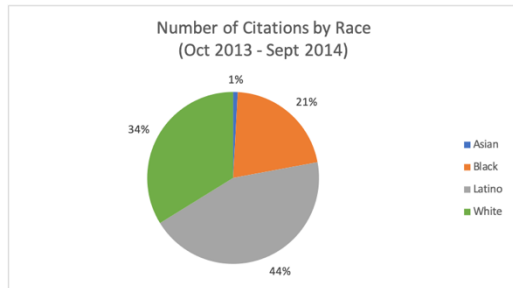
Notes on Common Citations (Oct 2013 – Sept. 2014)

The most common citations are for driving with an expired license or without proof of insurance. It may be worth noting that these are not infractions that would be apparent to a police officer prior to a stop, whereas DUIs and other driving infractions (comparably low) are observable infractions that would initiate stopping a vehicle.



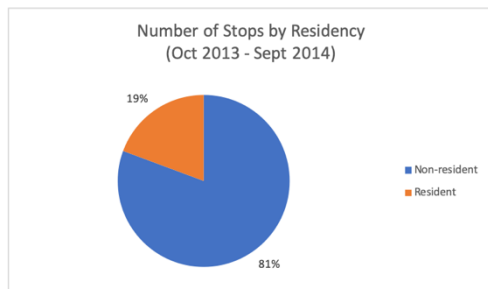
Number of Stops by Race (Oct 2013 – Sept. 2014)

Asian	1%
Black	19%
Latinx	31%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	49%



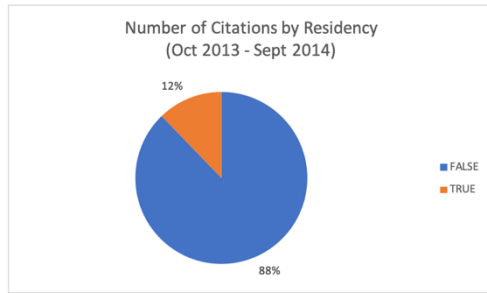
Number of Citations by Race (Oct 2013 – Sept. 2014)

Asian	1%
Black	21%
Latinx	44%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	34%



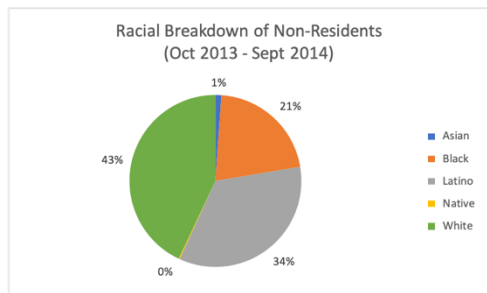
Number of Stops by Residency (Oct 2013 – Sept. 2014)

Non Resident	81%
Resident	19%



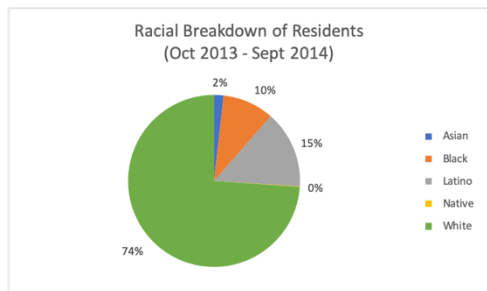
Number of Citations by Residency
(Oct 2013 – Sept. 2014)

Non Resident	88%
Resident	12%



Non-Residents Stopped by Race
(Oct 2013 – Sept. 2014)

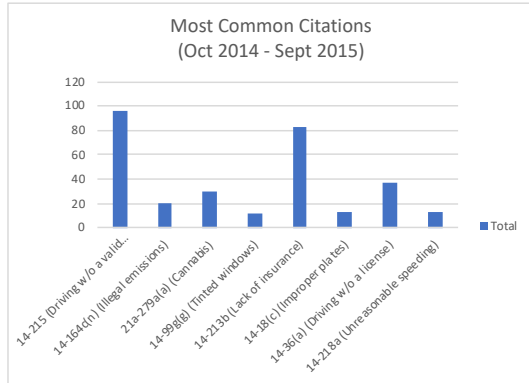
Asian	1%
Black	21%
Latinx	34%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	43%



Residents Stopped by Race
(Oct 2013 – Sept. 2014)

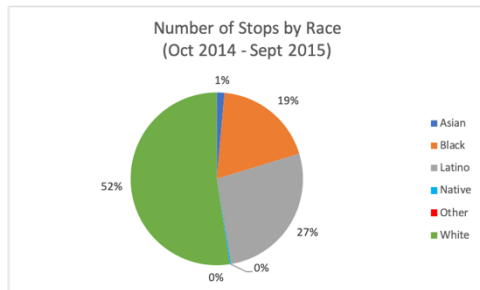
Asian	2%
Black	10%
Latinx	15%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	74%

Traffic Stops and Citations by Race and Residency (Oct. 2014 – Sept. 2015)



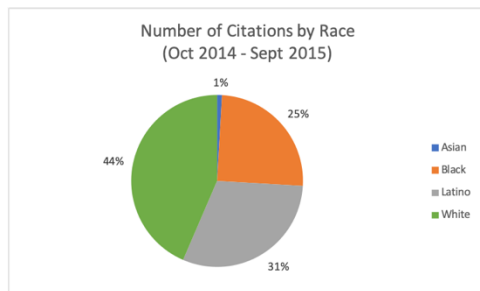
Notes on Common Citations (Oct 2014 – Sept. 2015)

The most common citations are again for driving with an expired license or without proof of insurance.



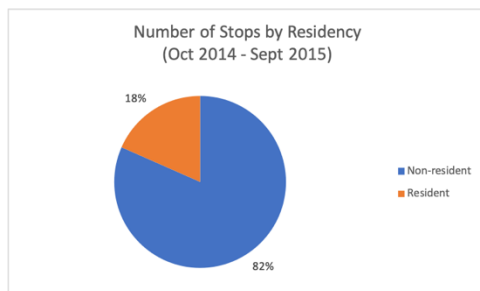
Number of Stops by Race (Oct 2014 – Sept. 2015)

Asian	1%
Black	19%
Latino	27%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	52%



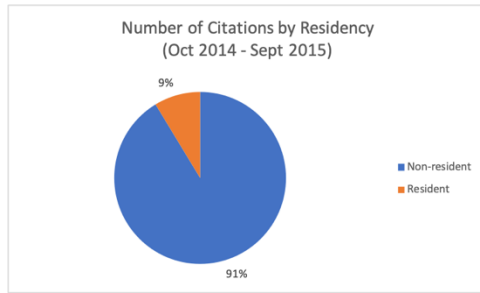
Number of Citations by Race (Oct 2014 – Sept. 2015)

Asian	1%
Black	25%
Latino	31%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	44%



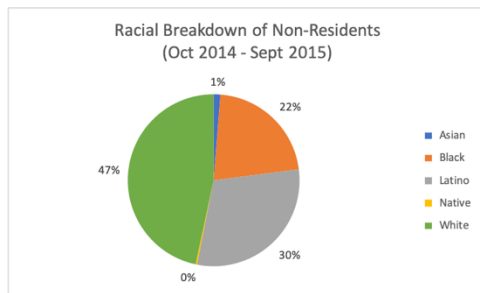
Number of Stops by Residency (Oct 2014 – Sept. 2015)

Non Resident	82%
Resident	18%



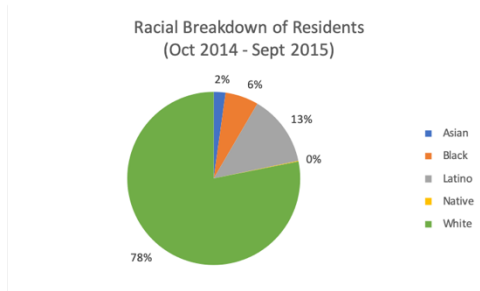
Number of Citations by Residency
(Oct 2014 – Sept. 2015)

Non Resident	91%
Resident	9%



Non-Residents Stopped by Race
(Oct 2014 – Sept. 2015)

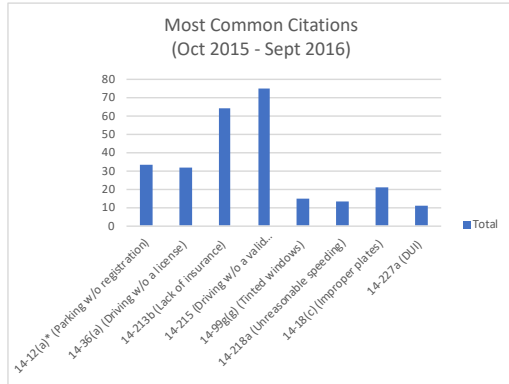
Asian	1%
Black	22%
Latinx	30%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	47%



Residents Stopped by Race
(Oct 2014 – Sept. 2015)

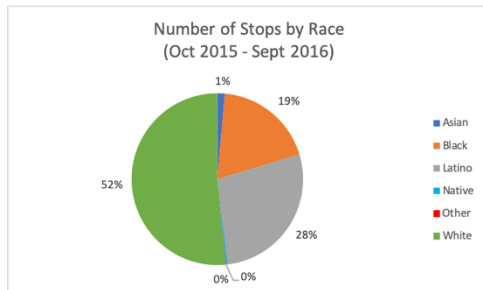
Asian	2%
Black	6%
Latinx	13%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	78%

Traffic Stops and Citations by Race and Residency (Oct. 2015 – Sept. 2016)



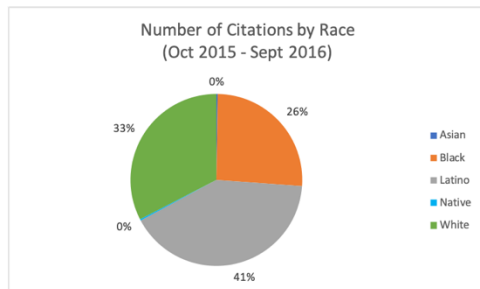
Notes on Common Citations (Oct 2015 – Sept. 2016)

The most common citations are again for driving with an expired license or without proof of insurance. Parking without registration is a new measure included for this year.



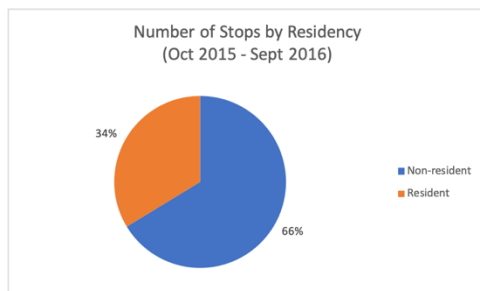
Number of Stops by Race (Oct 2015 – Sept. 2016)

Asian	1%
Black	19%
Latinx	28%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	52%



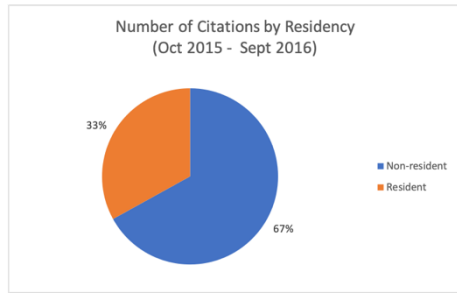
Number of Citations by Race (Oct 2015 – Sept. 2016)

Asian	0%
Black	26%
Latinx	41%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	33%



Number of Stops by Residency (Oct 2015 – Sept. 2016)

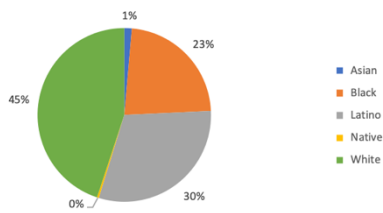
Non Resident	66%
Resident	34%



Number of Citations by Residency
(Oct 2015 – Sept. 2016)

Non Resident	67%
Resident	33%

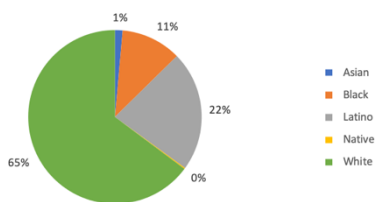
Racial Breakdown of Non-Residents
(Oct 2015 - Sept 2016)



Non-Residents Stopped by Race
(Oct 2015 – Sept. 2016)

Asian	1%
Black	23%
Latinx	30%
Middle Eastern	0%
Native American	0%
White	45%

Racial Breakdown of Residents
(Oct 2015 - Sept 2016)

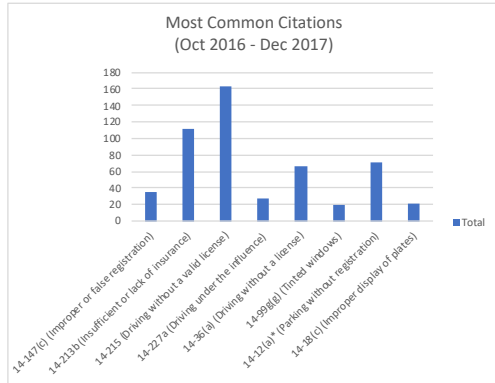


Residents Stopped by Race
(Oct 2015 – Sept. 2016)

Asian	1%
Black	11%
Latinx	22%
Middle Eastern	0%
Native American	0%
White	65%

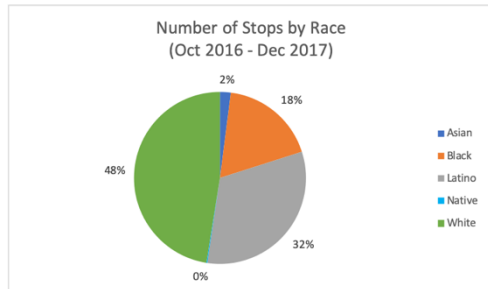
**Traffic Stops and Citations by Race and Residency
(Oct. 2016 – Dec. 2017*)**

*It appears that this is the measurement period where the department makes the switch over to accounting by calendar year. As a result, this measurement period is actually for 1 year and three months and counts of stops and citations are higher across the board as an obvious result.



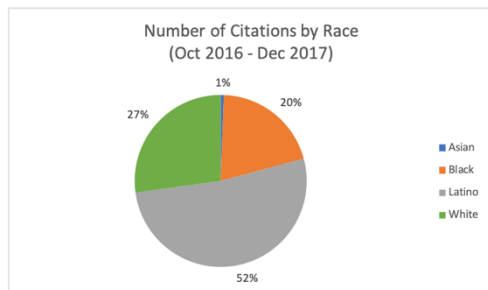
Notes on Common Citations
(Oct 2016 – Dec. 2017)

The most common citations are again for driving with an expired license or without proof of insurance.



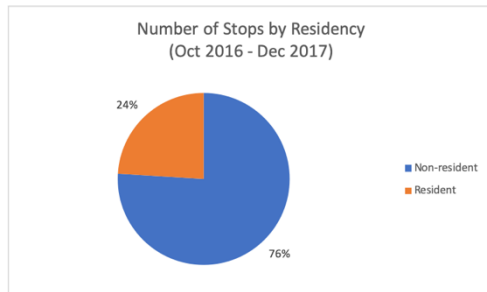
Number of Stops by Race
(Oct 2016 – Sept. 2017)

Asian	2%
Black	18%
Latinx	32%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	48%



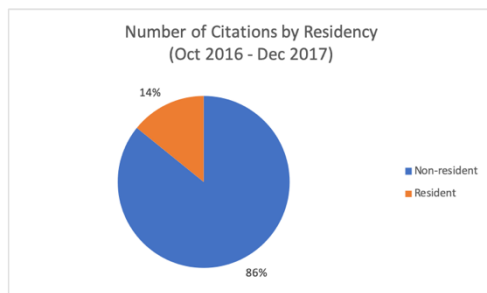
Number of Citations by Race
(Oct 2016 – Sept. 2017)

Asian	1%
Black	20%
Latinx	52%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	27%



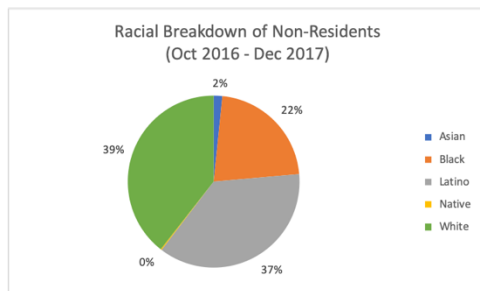
Number of Stops by Residency
(Oct 2016 – Dec 2017)

Non Resident	76%
Resident	24%



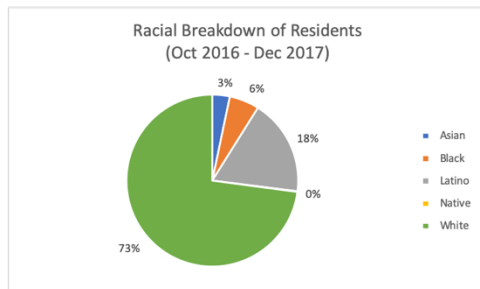
Number of Citations by Residency
(Oct 2016 – Dec 2017)

Non Resident	86%
Resident	14%



Non-Residents Stopped by Race
(Oct 2016 – Dec. 2017)

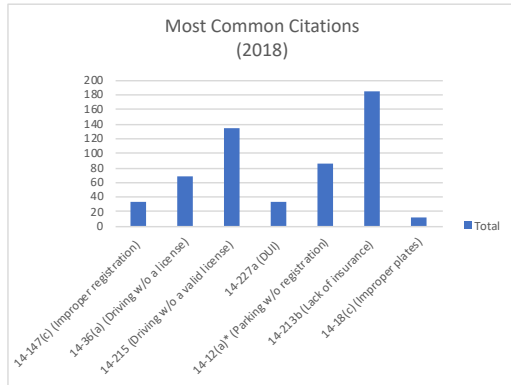
Asian	2%
Black	22%
Latinx	37%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	39%



Residents Stopped by Race
(Oct 2016 – Dec. 2017)

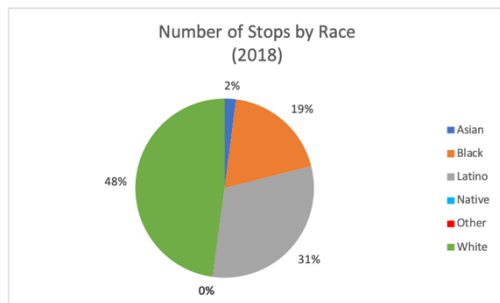
Asian	3%
Black	6%
Latinx	18%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	73%

Traffic Stops and Citations by Race and Residency (2018)



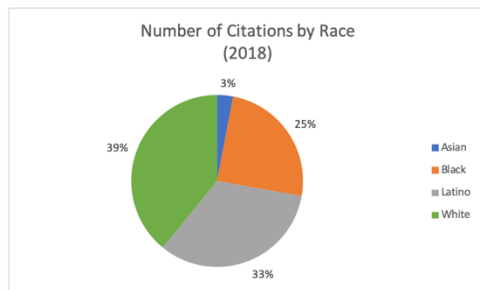
Notes on Common Citations (2018)

The most common citations are again for driving with an expired license or without proof of insurance. Citations for driving without insurance seems to be comparatively higher than in previous years.



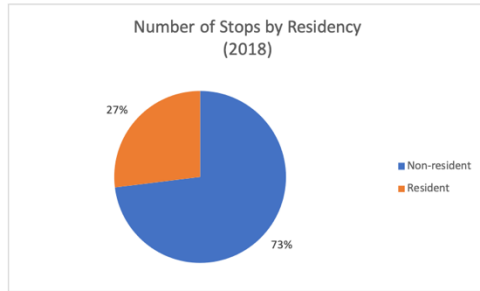
Number of Stops by Race (2018)

Asian	2%
Black	19%
Latinx	31%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	48%



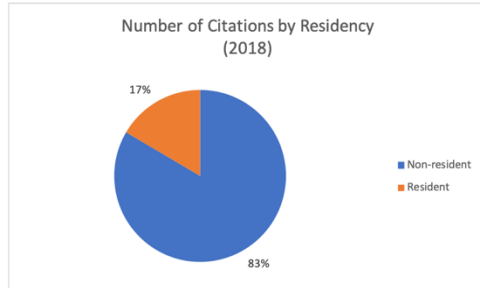
Number of Citations by Race (2018)

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Black	25%
Latinx	33%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	39%



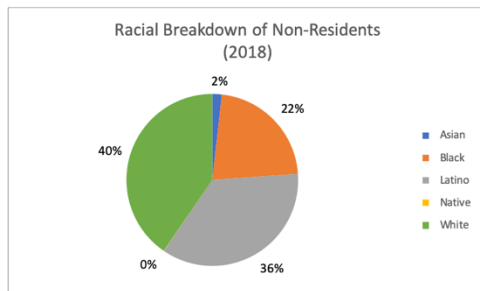
Number of Stops by Residency (2018)

Non Resident	73%
Resident	27%



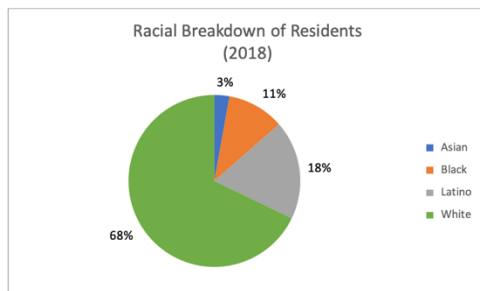
Number of Citations by Residency (2018)

Non Resident	17%
Resident	83%



Non-Residents Stopped by Race (2018)

Asian	2%
Black	22%
Latinx	36%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	40%



Residents Stopped by Race (2018)

Asian	3%
Black	11%
Latinx	18%
Other	0%
Native American	0%
White	68%